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TAGS: [PREL](#) [KTIA](#) [NATO](#) [XG](#) [ZB](#) [LH](#)  
SUBJECT: LITHUANIA WANTS INCREASED USG ATTENTION VIA  
REVIVED BALTIC CHARTER

Classified By: Ambassador John A. Cloud for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d)

¶1. (C) Summary: Lithuanian political leaders have recently called in Vilnius and Washington for the U.S. to revive the 1998 Baltic Charter as a mechanism to get a more "muscular" USG presence in the Baltic region, and also have the U.S. help resolve Lithuania's security related issues. The Lithuanians say utilizing this Charter will not threaten their commitment to NATO and Article V common defense.

¶2. (C) Lithuania is one of our most forward leaning allies in Eastern Europe, but its desire to re-activate this Charter highlights the Lithuanian's inability both to appreciate the regular, high level consultations they already receive as a NATO ally and to solve basic, long standing energy security issues with their own regional partners. Post believes USG consultations -- particularly given the recent increase in their tempo -- meets Lithuanian needs and that there is no need to re-start the Baltic Charter mechanisms. Post will endeavor to supplement Lithuania's inter-agency briefing process on our existing consultations in order to ensure that all of the key players are briefed. End summary.

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The Baltic Charter  
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¶3. (U) The Baltic Charter is a political agreement signed in January 1998 by Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, and the United States, which served as a mechanism for USG-Baltic political and security consultation, pre-NATO accession. As the Baltic countries progressed toward NATO membership, the Charter's mandated consultations became less relevant as political and security dialogue transferred to NATO fora.

¶4. (C) It is not a coincidence that the Lithuanian push to revive the Baltic Charter comes only two months after the Russian's invasion of Georgian territory. The crisis both validated Lithuanian suspicions that Russia's aim is to gain control over former Soviet states and also unleashed deep seated insecurity that the Baltic States "might be next."

¶5. (C) GOL officials have raised the idea of reviving the Baltic Charter with Estonia and Latvia, but characterized their neighbors' reaction as "less enthusiastic." The Lithuanians say they will continue to lobby the other Baltic States and expect no objections to this idea in the end.

¶6. (C) The GOL has raised the idea of re-activating the Baltic Charter in several meetings with USG officials. President Adamkus mentioned the idea during his September 29 meetings in Washington. The Prime Minister's foreign policy advisor Mindaugas Jurkynas told Post in early October that the Lithuanians want to invoke the Charter and see a larger military footprint -- "more ships and planes" -- in Lithuania as the desired result - even though a larger American footprint in the Baltic States was never part of the Charter.

¶7. (C) MFA Director of the Transatlantic Cooperation and Security Policy Department Vytautas Leskevicius said the Lithuanians specifically want to activate the Charter's Partnership Commission, which the agreement describes as "chaired at the appropriately high level to evaluate common efforts" and which "meets once a year or as needed to take stock of the Partnership, (and) assess results of bilateral consultations on economic, military, and other areas..." Leskevicius emphasized that re-activating the Charter is no threat to NATO and said that Lithuania has confidence in the Article Five common defense commitment. However the Lithuanians want more "institutionalized" consultation (and more attention, in general) in a smaller, sub-NATO setting.

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How We Engage with Lithuania  
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¶8. (C) In stressing the need for increased "institutionalized" consultation apart from NATO, the Lithuanians emphasize the fanfare of "summits" and high-profile meetings, while under-valuing the kinds of regularly scheduled interactions we normally have with our closest allies in Brussels and elsewhere. Since July, Lithuanian political leaders have met with the President, had two meetings with the Vice President, one with the Secretary of State, and two with the Secretary of Defense. Lithuanian military leaders hosted USSOCOM Commander Admiral Olson and the USS Elrod ship visit in August, and USAFE Commander General Brady in early September. They also met with the Chairman of the JCS Admiral Mullen in Brussels, also in September, and will host him in Vilnius in October. Another frigate, the USS Doyle, will visit at the end of October.

¶9. (C) Lithuanian MFA Under Secretary Pavilionis has been clear that they do not see the current e-PINE (USG, Baltic States, and Scandinavia) consultations as a substitute for consultations under the Baltic Charter. Pavilionis has told us that Lithuania has frequent consultations with Scandinavia; what they are looking for are consultations with the USG. In addition, the weakness of Lithuania's inter-agency process has resulted in the MFA and the Presidency not getting timely readouts of EUCOM consultations with the Baltic States on security issues.

¶10. (C) Through our current interactions with Lithuania, they usually achieve what they need, especially in the security area. For example, in the aftermath of the Georgia crisis, they requested a threat re-assessment for Eastern Europe and a contingency plan in case of Russian aggression into the Baltic region. NATO is currently, informally developing just such a plan.

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Energy Security  
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¶11. (C) The Lithuanians also want to utilize the Baltic Charter to get the USG involved in energy security issues. Despite Lithuanian lobbying, the EU appears unwilling to allow them to keep their Chernobyl-style nuclear reactor at Ignalina operating past 2009. The Lithuanians agreed to close this plant as a pre-condition for joining the EU, yet have made little progress on alternative sources over the past several years.

¶12. (C) Lithuania also has disagreements on energy with its Baltic ally, Latvia. In the GOL's opinion, the Latvians are attempting to divert an electrical cable connection from Sweden to their country, instead of Lithuania as initially planned. An MFA source openly said he hoped the USG could help resolve problems such as this through the Baltic Charter. We clearly must engage the entire EU to push for greater energy security in Europe, but creating a new forum to adjudicate intra-Baltic spats would not accomplish that.

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Conclusion  
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¶13. (C) While we agree that in the current climate we should do all we can to reassure the Lithuanian government and people of our commitment to Lithuania's security and prosperity, we are wary of using the recently re-discovered Baltic Charter, its mandated consultations, and the inevitable, additional bureaucracy, as our means to do so.  
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